

## EXHIBIT 3

# Education Matters



MARCH 2012

*A newsletter from the  
East Ramapo Central School District  
for non-public school parents*

*105 South Madison Avenue. Spring Valley, NY 10977  
Dr. Joel Klein, Superintendent of Schools      Susie Grama, Editor*

VOLUME XI NUMBER VI

## Superintendent's Message



Dr. Joel Klein

Once again, budget time has arrived. The budget is an important issue both educationally and financially. The East Ramapo Central School District Board of Education works hard to provide the best education and services to its public and non-public school students in a fiscally responsible manner. Therefore, we hold open meetings and budget workshops in which the public can give its input and gain first-hand information concerning the topics and the costs related to our community's schools. The budget workshop dates are March 14th, 21st, 28th, April 4th, and 18th.

On March 28th, there was an open community forum on the budget. The participants were asked to break up into panels and groups to get input from the community concerning what is high priority and what is not high priority when determining what to adopt and possible cutbacks.

On April 4th, there will be a Board of Education meeting at which the outcome of the March 28th meeting will be presented. There will be a break for the Spring holidays, and on April 18th, the Board of Education will adopt the budget.

On Tuesday, May 15, the annual election and budget vote will be conducted.

Under New York State Legislation, there is a tax levy cap which prevents the tax levy from being raised more than 2%, except for certain items, such as tax certioraris, pension increases, legal suits, etc.

Since the tax levy cap allows only a 2% increase, the new budget will be very tight. The health and safety of all our students is a high priority in the educational picture, and we will not reduce services that would compromise the safety of our students. We hope to maintain as many services as possible, but everything must be reviewed.

We look forward to community participation in planning for the next school year.

## **SPECIAL!!!** *Congressman Engel Invites Students to Enter Congressional Art Contest*

Congressman Eliot Engel invites students in grades 9-12 to enter the Annual Congressional Art Contest. Winners' works will be displayed in the Capitol from June 12, 2012, through early May, 2013. There is a winner from each participating Congressional district. Winners in Engel's 17th District may be eligible for a scholarship in an art or design school.

### The art work must follow these guidelines:

- Must be 2-dimensional
  - Must have a frame smaller than 28" x 28" x 4" and weigh less than 15 lbs.
  - Must be unique in concept, design, and execution and may not violate any U.S. copyright laws
  - A photo of the art work must be sent to [engelartcompetition@mail.house.gov](mailto:engelartcompetition@mail.house.gov) by **April 6, 2012**.
- The art work will hang in the Capitol for an entire year and cannot be returned to student earlier.

### Accepted mediums are as follows:

Paintings: oil, acrylics, watercolor, etc.      Collage: must be two-dimensional      Prints: lithographs, silkscreen, block prints  
Drawings: pastels, colored pencil, charcoal, ink, markers (recommend charcoal and pastel drawings be fixed)      Photography  
Mixed Media: use no more than two mediums, such as pencil, ink, watercolor, etc.      Computer-generated Art

Please contact [engelartcompetition@mail.house.gov](mailto:engelartcompetition@mail.house.gov) to express your intent to participate, and be sure to send a photo of your entry before **April 6, 2012**. Entries will be judged on **April 21, 2012**. An event will be held at the Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. on June 20, 2012, to unveil the winning art pieces from all over the country. Winners and their families are invited to attend this event, and two free airplane tickets will be provided to the winner, who may also be eligible for a scholarship. For questions or further information, contact Congressman Engel at the same e-mail address.

*For information about CAPs' schedule for Parenting Workshops, call 845-425-7877, ext. 344, or e-mail to [admin@capscs.org](mailto:admin@capscs.org).  
See story on page 2.*

## Healthy and Effective Communication with and for Your Children

The importance of proper communication within the family structure was the theme of the educational evening for the non-public schools that took place on February 19, 2012, at the Yeshiva of Spring Valley Boys Building. It was presented to the large crowd by the Center for Applied Psychology (CAPs) at Bikur Cholim in partnership with the East Ramapo Central School District and several educational institutions in our area, namely, ASHAR, Bais Mikroh, Bais Hachinuch, Cheder Chabad, CHEIN, Yeshiva Eitz Chaim Bnos Bracha, and Yeshiva of Spring Valley.

Dr. Yitzchak Schechter, Director of CAPs, opened the evening with a talk about the crucial role of communication in the world. Communication, he said, encompasses things that are said and those that are not said. It includes body language as well as the tone that a person uses when s/he speaks.

He then introduced the speakers for the event, all of whom are therapists and clinicians at CAPs at Bikur Cholim, in addition to other positions that they hold.

Dr. Rena Goldin's topic was "Modeling Respectful Communication: Healthy Communication With Your Children Starts With Healthy Communication With Your Spouse." She related stories about different styles of communication between couples and the effect on children. She spoke of one couple who had decided never to have even small arguments in front of their children. The result was that their children never knew that it was alright for couples to have differences of opinion. When their daughter got married and found that she was having disagreements with her husband, she thought that the marriage was not good, and she asked for a divorce. Children learn communication styles from the interaction of their parents.

Dr. Goldin presented ways of proper communication, based on the work of Dr. John Gottman. Healthy communication begins with respect, friendship, and concern of one spouse for the other. These qualities should also form positive ways of interacting with one's children.

She discussed the "emotional bank account" that couples should build. Every action of affection, concern, respect, honor, and friendship that one displays is like putting money into an account. During times of stress and discord, negative actions are likened to deducting from the bank account. If there is enough of a positive balance in the account, the marriage will still be in a good place. If there is more negative behavior, then the account can be depleted, and the marriage could be in trouble.

She noted that it doesn't necessarily matter how a couple argues as long as it works for both spouses. Predictors for problems and divorce are criticism, defensiveness, contempt, and ignoring.

Healthy marriages, Dr. Goldin stated, usually lead to children who are emotionally healthy. Contentious relationships will often result in children who have behavior prob-

lems, are depressed, are truant, and have problems with their peers.

According to Dr. Gottman, she said, there are two groups of problems - perpetual and solvable. Perpetual problems include housework, finances, in-laws, and children. Constraints of time prevented her from delving into those issues, so she focused on the solvable type, which are "situational issues that do not reverberate into other areas of your life." She listed ways to solve these problems, including monitoring one's own reaction to the situation, learning compromise, and increasing tolerance for the imperfection of others.

Strategies to solve problems between spouses or between parents and children are: complain without blame; use "I" statements; describe what is happening - don't judge; state clearly what you need in positive terms; and be polite and appreciative.

Dr. Goldin noted that there is an additional component to good communication with one's spouse: to present a unified front to the children. She mentioned ways to accomplish this. One is to accept your feelings and your partner's point of view.

Strategies for creating a peaceful home after a disagreement include: each spouse taking turns discussing his/her feelings; taking responsibility for one's own role; sharing possible triggers; and making constructive plans for dealing with the next issue.

She added that healthy marriages are good for the immune system, therefore, they contribute to a longer, healthier life.

The next speaker, Mrs. Evi Nakdimen, LMSW, specializes in working with children and their parents. Her talk centered on teaching parents and children the language of emotions. She stated that the way parents communicate with their children determines how the child will communicate with those around him. In turn, how a child communicates with others will be more of a determinant of success than scholastic ability.

She noted that her presentation was also based on the work of John Gottman. He proposes that there are four types of parents, two of which Mrs. Nakdimen chose to discuss.

The Emotion Dismissing Parents do not notice red flags in their child's behavior. The parents are not aware of the child's lower intensity emotions - only those that are obvious and blatant. They view negative emotions as poison. These parents blame themselves if the child is not happy, feeling that they did something wrong to cause the negative feelings. They are not introspective, and lack detailed vocabulary for emotions.

She pointed out that Emotion Dismissing Parents can be warm people and behave in a loving manner to their children, but they don't like to acknowledge that there could be a problem.

*continued on page 3*



Dr. Yitzchak Schechter



Dr. Rena Goldin

**CAPs** *continued from page 2*

On the other hand, Emotion Coaching Parents are aware of subtle variations in the child's emotions and the parents are able to deal with problems before they escalate. Rather than spurn these situations, they look upon them as opportunities for bonding, Mrs. Nakdimen explained.



Evi Nakdimen

These parents realize that fluctuations in emotions are part of normal development, and they use these times to communicate with their children in a positive way and with empathy. The parents verbalize that all feelings are acceptable, but misbehavior is not. Setting limits is also a

critical part of raising well-functioning children.

Mrs. Nakdimen listed Five Steps of Emotional Coaching that can help parents improve their skills.

- 1) Be aware of the child's emotions: In order to do that, the parents must be aware of their own emotions. This is possible even without the parents being highly expressive and without fear of their losing control.
- 2) Attitude: Parents should realize that they are not responsible for fixing all of the child's emotions.
- 3) Empathize: Validate, accept, and respect the child's feelings. This can be done by listening attentively, being aware of the child's and one's own body language, and acknowledge the feeling with words or gestures.
- 4) Give child's feeling a name: One provides a sense of coping by giving the child a name for the emotion, *i.e.*, "That sounds really frustrating."
- 5) Set limits while helping the child problem solve: Brainstorm for possible solutions based on the family's values.

It is not appropriate to attempt emotional coaching when one is pressed for time or if there are other people around. She suggested getting feedback from the child after the solution was tried to find out if and how it worked.

The third speaker was Stephanie Hartman, PsyD. She specializes in working with youth and their families. Her talk, "Communication Techniques," centered around communication between home and school. She cited research that shows that when parents and school work together for the child's benefit, children display better school performance, better behavior, and a more positive attitude about themselves and school. There are parents who, because of their own background, are afraid to meet with their child's school, and they have to work on overcoming their fear for the good of their child. She recommended that parents introduce themselves to their child's teacher as early in the school year as possible, and to apprise the teachers about any special problems their child might have, or if there is an unusual situation at home which could affect the child's behavior.

Parents should try to keep informed about the child's progress, and if there are activities they could do at home to reinforce his/her school studies. Parents can find out from teachers the best way to practice the material learned, and they can purchase educational games and extra workbooks.

They should ask questions concerning the child's behavior and socialization. To forge a stronger bond with the school, the parent could volunteer for class or school projects.

The school can also make steps towards strengthening the parent-school partnership. Dr. Hartman mentioned that schools could plan meetings and activities that introduce teachers and families in a positive setting. Schools can provide parents with periodic updates of class activities as well as sponsor presentations and workshops for families. Teachers can give the parents homework guides and tips on how to help the child learn well.

She mentioned several steps that parents should take before teacher conferences.

Parents could gather relevant material, such as past records and report cards, to bring to the conference. They could discuss the purpose of the conference with their child beforehand and get feedback from him/her, if warranted.



Dr. Stephanie Hartman

Parents should ask questions of the teachers if they don't understand what was discussed at their meeting. They should also be forthcoming in complimenting the teacher and expressing appreciation for her/his efforts.

Dr. Schechter rounded out the evening with his presentation "Equipping Children to Make Healthy Choices on Their Own." He emphasized the important role that communication plays in the lives of children, and that it can be influential in forming the kind of adults they become.

"Children are under our care for a short amount of time," he said. Thereby, he stressed how adults should maximize their opportunity to instill values in their children and to form well-rounded, emotionally healthy individuals.

"The values we imbue in our children with love and consistency can stand them in good stead for a lifetime," he stated. "Our communication to our children is our lasting legacy to them."

He described "communication" as the messages about ourselves that we give to and receive from the world.

We want our children to do the right thing, learn for the future, become independent, and make good choices, he told the audience. He pointed out that children are responsible for themselves and parents have to be able to let go and realize that they can't control everything. This is a reality that is especially relevant and important to integrate when dealing with teen-agers.

Dr. Schechter feels that it is important to help children and let them make their own decisions. Parents should validate their child's feelings, but that does not mean validating something irrational or reinforcing something negative.

The challenge, he remarked, is to find the right balance. Parents should have realistic expectations, and they shouldn't make perfection the goal. They should be honest with themselves and with their children. Parents should set limitations and boundaries, and be sure to say and do a good thing every day.

The evening ended with a lively question and answer period between the audience and all the speakers.



**JOB POSTINGS***East Ramapo Central School District***Certificated Positions - Available Immediately**

Director of Special Student Services - SDA or SDL required;  
 5 yrs. central administrative experience in Public School Special  
 Education and expertise in Special Education budgeting are required  
 Physical Education - Part Time  
 Technology - Part Time  
 School Psychologist - leave replacement  
 (send resumé to Dr. Berkowitz, OSSS, Administration Building)

**Certificated Position - Available 8-01-12**

Anticipated - Athletic Coordinator

**Non-Certificated (Classified) Positions - Available Immediately**

Clerk Typist - Spanish Speaking  
 Senior Clerk Typist - Yiddish  
 Certified Occupational Therapist Assistant - Substitute

**Coaching Position - Available Immediately**

Girls Golf

To apply for certificated positions, please submit a letter of interest and a resumé (hard copies only) to:

Personnel Office  
 Administration Building  
 105 South Madison Avenue  
 Spring Valley, NY 10977

For certificated positions, please also apply on the BOCES On-Line Application System, [www.olasjobs.org](http://www.olasjobs.org).

State Education Department Requirements : A civil service test is required to hold a non-certificated position.

*To apply for non-certificated positions,  
 please submit a letter of interest and resume to:*

Dianne Psaros, Personnel Office  
 Administration Building  
 105 South Madison Avenue  
 Spring Valley, NY 10977

To apply for a coaching position, please contact  
 William Pilla, Athletic Coordinator

Spring Valley High School, 361 Route 59, Spring Valley, NY 10977

***What is DIBELS Next?***

On-going assessments of students' progress is an essential component of the educational process. There is available to teachers a research-based practical and easy-to-use assessment tool called DIBELS - Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literary Skills. Dynamic Measurement Group created this assessment tool, and is continuously doing research to find the best ways to support children in their learning. They have made some changes to the original system, thus, DIBELS Next.

Dr. Stephanie Stollar presented a workshop on DIBELS Next to non-public school staff on February 7th and 8th.

DIBELS is strictly an assessment, not a teaching system. It is used in kindergarten through grade six, and is generally administered three times a year. It is standardized and helpful in identifying students

at risk and those who are not on grade level. For students who need extra instruction, the assessments are usually done more frequently, depending on the needs of the child. Dr. Stollar said, "It's like taking the children's temperature throughout the year."

Each evaluation takes only one minute. It assesses specific basic early literary skills: phonemic awareness (the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds), letter sounds, and fluency. Based on the outcome of the evaluations, the teacher can plan a learning program for each student.

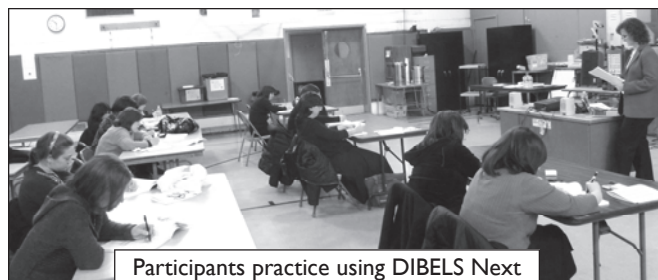
There are benchmark goals for every grade level. A benchmark goal is the lowest level mark on which a child should be. The DIBELS system provides a Benchmark Assess-



Dr. Stephanie Stollar

ment booklet for each child, so that progress can be recorded and monitored. The booklet contains the material for the evaluation, that is, the questions and the child's answers. There are specific guidelines for administering the evaluation to assure that the test is standardized and the outcome of the evaluation is valid.

Struggling students can be helped to improve their academics by intense instruction in the areas in which they need help. Careful, detailed scoring helps teachers know what to teach the child. The DIBELS Next evaluation can help teachers analyze if the problem is letter sounds or blending sounds to form words. The scoring shows benchmarks, individual progress, and types of errors. The scoring booklet contains a



Participants practice using DIBELS Next

list of response patterns, with levels of correctness for each answer. The further away from the benchmark goals a student is, the more frequently s/he is tested.

Dr. Stollar explained the evaluation procedures, and the teachers practiced administering the tests. They formed groups of three and rotated playing the roles of the assessor, the student, and the observer.

Many non-public schools have been using DIBELS and they find it a valuable screening tool.